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ABSTRACT

This booklet describes one of the earliest staff development models to support school-based improvement, the RPTIM model. The letters "RPTIM" represent the five stages of the school-based approach to staff development--readiness, planning, training, implementation, and maintenance. The model is based on the belief that the school is the primary unit of change and that careful long-range planning is crucial to realizing improvement. The model advocates the development of commitment, ownership, and a positive, supportive school climate; the continuous involvement of all staff members in professional development; and the design of inservice education based on adult learning theories. The first five sections provide information on the five stages of the model. Section 6 stresses that the stages are both sequential and interactive. Five key elements are reviewed: the use of expert help, the development of ownership and commitment, the full involvement of the principal, a focus on staff development to support school improvement, and an emphasis on research. A brief final section offers a general summing up. (LMI)

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How to Organize a School-Based Staff Development Program

Fred Wood, Joyce Killian, Frank McQuarrie, and Steven Thompson

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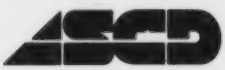

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How to Organize a School-Based Staff Development Program

Introduction v

1. The Readiness Stage 1

2. The Planning Stage 11

3. The Training Stage 20

4. The Implementation Stage 34

5. The Maintenance Stage 44

6. The Successful Use of the RPTIM Process 53

7. The Key to Significant Change 58

References and Suggested Readings 59

About the Authors 62

Introduction

EDUCATORS WILL LIKELY REMEMBER THE 1980S AS THE DECADE OF school-based improvement and staff development. That both received a great deal of attention during those ten years is appropriate, for each is dependent on the other. There can be no significant improvement in administrative practice, teaching, or school programs without effective staff development. And staff development is aimless and ineffective without clear direction concerning the kinds of improvement we want in our schools.

Many of the educational trends and issues of the 1990s are outgrowths of the experiences of the 1980s, so we can expect staff development and school-based improvement to continue to be dominant themes in educators' efforts to decentralize decisions about change and make current practice more effective.

One of the earliest staff development models to support school-based improvement was the RPTIM model, introduced in the ASCD Yearbook *Staff Development/ Organization Development* (Wood, Thompson, and Russell 1981). Based on a careful analysis of research and best practice, this model has since been validated several times in research reported by Thompson (1982), Wood and Kleine (1988), and Sly (1992).

RPTIM is based on the belief that the school is the primary unit of change and that careful long-range planning is essential to realizing improvement. The model advocates the development of commitment, ownership, and a positive, supportive school climate; the continuous involvement of all staff members in professional development; and the design of inservice education that is based on what is known about adult learners.

The letters RPTIM represent the five stages of this school-based approach to staff development:

- **Stage 1: Readiness.** The principal and central office staff work with the school faculty to establish a climate that supports school improvement. Staff members select improvement goals and develop their commitment to implement new professional behaviors and programs to achieve those goals.
- **Stage 2: Planning.** Staff members design a system of inservice programs to achieve the improvements identified in the first stage.
- **Stage 3: Training.** Staff members participate in effective inservice training that reflects what is known about adult learners.
- **Stage 4: Implementation.** Teachers and administrators translate what they learned during the inservice training into professional practice in their actual work setting.
- **Stage 5: Maintenance.** Teachers and administrators use systematic monitoring techniques to ensure that the changes they have made will continue over time.

With this book, we hope to provide a basic understanding of how to design staff development programs that support school-based improvement. Such programs are frequently referred to as *school-based staff development*. Although this book focuses more on practice and "how to" than on presenting a detailed research base, we have included suggested readings at the end of the book for those who would like more information about the research and theoretical foundations that support the ideas presented.

1
The Readiness Stage

READINESS IS AN ESSENTIAL, THOUGH OFTEN NEGLECTED, STAGE IN the design of school-based staff development (Wood 1989). The focus of this first stage, which usually lasts three to six months, is on mobilizing broad-based support among teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders for improvements in professional practice within the school. It is here that a vision for the school is developed, improvement goals are set, and programs and practices to achieve these goals are selected.

The activities in this stage tend to be highly sequenced and designed to help the staff establish a supportive school climate, learn about practices and programs, and develop commitment to specific improvements. What happens at this stage shapes, to a great extent, what will occur later in the staff development process.

The Readiness stage is based on the belief that it is important to develop ownership of and commitment to specific improvements that serve as the basis for staff development (Wood 1989, McQuarrie 1991). In school improvement, the feelings of ownership and commitment that are developed are similar to those associated with owning and valuing one's first home: the strong desire to have your home, or school, be the best and the willingness to learn and work hard to make things the way you envision them to be. Ownership of and commitment to school improvement are developed through involving teachers, administrators, and parents in decisions about the improvement goals and the selection of practices and programs that will move them toward their vision of their ideal school (Withall and Wood 1979).

This stage is also where attention must be given to building a climate supportive of change and to developing the skills necessary for the faculty to set goals and select the changes they want to implement in their school improvement plan. In a climate that supports change, teachers and administrators know one another's backgrounds and values, trust one another, accept differences and see them as strengths, and communicate effectively. They also have the problem-solving and small-group skills to make decisions as a school.

Key Readiness Tasks

The Readiness stage is composed of four major tasks: (1) establishing a supportive climate, (2) creating new expectations and commitments, (3) selecting improvement goals and the programs and practices to achieve those goals, and (4) obtaining support and commitment from stakeholders.

1. Establishing a Supportive Climate

The climate of a school affects teachers' and administrators' willingness to improve current practice. Many faculty are not ready to consider changes they want to make in their schools. Before they can deal with school improvement, they need to establish in their school the climate or conditions that support change. To make decisions about significant improvements, the faculty need to know and understand one another's values; establish open, two-way communication; develop trusting relationships; and recognize differences among the faculty as strengths (Wood, Thompson, and Russell 1981). They also need to be aware of what exists and what might be possible in their school.

Unless the principal and the central office staff consciously and actively work to establish such a supportive environment, planning and implementing effective school-based staff development for school improvement will be difficult, if not impossible. Many administrators have ignored this essential first step and rushed to mandate an inservice program. The results have been clear: schools going through the motions of change in

an environment that supports the status quo, and a corresponding lack of widespread, substantive improvement in educational programs and practices.

Time, Money, and Expectations. The first step in establishing a supportive climate is to establish a budget for school improvement and provide time for the school's staff to become involved in Readiness activities. If time and money for school improvement are not provided, staff members will likely believe that school improvement is not a district priority. Once these resources have been guaranteed, the principal of the school and the central office staff must establish the expectation that the school faculty will become involved in identifying improvement goals and selecting practices or programs that will increase student learning. They must also identify any "givens" for school improvement: goals or areas that the school is required to address in its improvement plan. For example, the school board and superintendent may require that the school select some or all of its improvement goals from a list established for the district. Or they may require that the school address a specific goal, such as developing thinking skills. Many districts, however, choose not to limit schools with such requirements.

The Planning Team. The next step of building the climate for change is to establish a planning team that represents those who are concerned about the quality of the educational practice in the school. In most schools, it is impossible to involve every person in every meeting about school improvement; therefore, it is essential to establish a planning or school improvement team to represent the diverse views of the school community. This team should include teachers, principals, parents, and if at all possible, a central office representative to ensure that the school improvement plan that is eventually developed has a knowledgeable advocate in the district office. The planning team may also include community and business leaders who can give the group new perspective and help ensure that the community power structure is represented and is more likely to support the school's plans for improvement (Sly 1992). A typical planning team includes eight to fifteen persons representing the key stakeholder groups in the school community.

Team Building and Awareness. Before the planning team begins its work to select improvement goals, a series of team-building and awareness activities are conducted for the entire school faculty and the team members. For the school faculty and their planning team to function effectively, they need to develop the skills, understandings, and relationships necessary to make group decisions about school improvement goals and programs. Team-building activities are often employed to help the faculty and planning team develop the skills, understandings, and relationships that are important conditions of a positive school climate.

Team Building. Team building should involve faculty and others who will make decisions during Readiness in small-group activities that help people become acquainted. Educators who will soon be making important decisions about their schools need to know one another; for example, they need to have knowledge about such things as family backgrounds, education, work experiences, and special events and interests. Quite frankly, most teachers and administrators know little more about their colleagues than that they teach a certain grade or subject in the school. It is difficult for people who know so little about their fellow faculty members to trust them, to understand why they react as they do, or to recognize the different strengths among people within the school community. If teachers, administrators, and others in the school community are to make significant commitments to changing current practice, they need to really know those with whom they work.

It is also important that they clarify and understand their values related to schooling, instruction, students, learning, and change. Team-building activities can be used to help faculty and planning team members clarify such things as priorities, beliefs about teaching and learning, problems that cause their school to be less effective, and factors that ensure the success or failure of change programs. By sharing what they value, teachers and administrators can identify both areas of general agreement and areas where consensus on improvements is unlikely to occur.

Team building in small groups should also be used to develop skills in listening and two-way communication.

These skills plus the ability to generate alternative solutions to problems through brainstorming and the ability to reach consensus are necessary for the faculty and the planning team. These skills empower those involved in making decisions about school improvement goals and programs. The feeling of empowerment and the ability to make group decisions are essential to a positive climate for change and staff development.

Awareness Activities. Awareness activities are designed to acquaint everyone with the strengths and weaknesses of their school. This information is often presented in the form of a report including data about student achievement and attendance, parent and student views of the school, and descriptions of current programs and practices and their effects on students, parents, and the professional staff. Some districts provide the planning team and school faculty with a data profile of the school's performance in the areas identified as part of the district's improvement goals.

Awareness activities are also conducted to acquaint the team members and school faculty with the newest and most promising practices and programs in education. Consultants, university faculty, readings, and study groups can be used to provide this information. Awareness activities are important because they broaden the knowledge base of those who will make decisions about improvement for the school. It's obvious, but true, that one cannot choose a particular improvement goal, program, or practice that one does not know about.

2. Creating New Expectations and Commitments

Developing a Vision. After completing the team-building and awareness activities, the planning team creates a vision of how the school should ideally function five or ten years from now. This vision usually includes an idealized view of the school, the curriculum, how teaching and learning take place, the expectations and outcomes for students and teachers, the organization and management of the school, and the involvement of parents and community (Chance 1992). Keeping in mind the overriding goal of all schools—to help students learn—the team members develop long-term goals for improvement that are necessary to achieve their vision. In developing these goals,

they create new expectations and commitments that will change the way everyone in the school will carry out their professional roles.

Examining Practices and Programs Currently Used in the School. With the help of some of their colleagues in the school community, the planning team members begin to search for practices and programs that will help the school staff achieve the improvement goals they have selected. They look first at the programs and instructional practices currently used in the school, because school improvement does not translate into abandoning effective practices simply for the sake of change. In fact, just the opposite is true; team members need to identify current practices that support the goals and expand them to include more teachers and students. Of course, practices that are inconsistent with the school's vision and goals must be identified and eliminated (Wood, Freeland, and Szabo 1985).

Examining the Research and Best Practice. While many effective practices will be identified within the school, the search for promising practices in pursuit of the school's improvement goals should also include examining the research and best practice reported in the literature and employed in other schools. To complete this external search, the planning team organizes into study groups to analyze the literature and visit schools that are using programs and practices that appear to hold promise for achieving their proposed improvement goals.

Site Visits. Visiting schools that have implemented programs to achieve improvement goals similar to or the same as those identified by the planning team can provide excellent insight into what might be done to improve current practice. During site visits, members of the planning team observe, interview, analyze, and systematically collect information that may be useful to their colleagues on the team as well as to the school staff.

All members of the planning team should be involved in the preparation for site visits. By specifying and agreeing on the types of information they are looking for, team members ensure that important information is collected for all programs, even when different people visit the sites (Wood and McQuarrie 1984).

The Professional Literature. The research and best practice reported in the professional literature should also be examined by the planning team. At least one study group from the planning team should systematically review the literature to identify and summarize information that might help the planning team decide which research-based improvements might be implemented to achieve the improvement goals. This group might also be responsible for determining whether programs identified as "promising" through site visits are supported by research (Wood, Thompson, and Russell 1981).

Assistance from Specialists. Whenever possible, specialists from the central office or universities should assist the planning team in their search for information. For example, reading specialists can help identify possible programs and practices the school might select to pursue their reading achievement goal. University professors and other researchers can serve as consultants and help the study groups identify model practices and programs as well as the research base that supports their use.

3. Selecting Programs and Practices

Based on their examination of current practices in their school and an examination of the literature and best practice in other schools, the planning team selects those programs and practices they believe should be implemented to achieve the improvement goals.

Once a final selection of the improvements is made, the planning team designs a procedure for presenting the goals and program(s) to the faculty and gaining their approval. If the team has been active in communicating with the faculty and getting and using their feedback, faculty approval will usually be a public affirmation of what has already been resolved and shared throughout Readiness.

4. Obtaining Support and Commitment

Throughout this stage there is a systematic effort to involve and get feedback from the entire school faculty and other groups represented on the planning team (Wood and McQuarrie 1984). This is done to ensure that the goals and plans developed by the planning team represent the best

thinking of all faculty and administrators in the school and have the support of these and other key stakeholder groups.

Involvement of those not on the planning team is accomplished by having the team members each meet with a group of their peers (teachers, administrators, parents, etc.) after every planning session to share the ideas being considered and the decisions being made. The focus in the peer group meetings is to make sure people know what is being discussed and planned, to get broad-based reactions to ideas and decisions, and to tap the expertise and opinions of all who will need to support the improvements established for the school.

This interaction with the faculty and others concerned about the school builds understanding and support for the eventual changes that will be proposed for the school. It averts the feeling that some group ("they") is deciding everything without providing opportunities for those affected to react or shape the final decisions, and it enables the planning team members to identify those improvements that have the greatest chance of successful implementation. It also helps build school and community commitment to and ownership of the goals and specific improvements in the school.

Some schools have involved all teachers and administrators in the school through feedback groups, which they established during team building at the beginning of the Readiness stage. Feedback groups meet after each planning session; thus, by the time the improvement goals are set by the team, everyone in the school has had a chance to react to them. The faculty also know about program options for achieving their school's goals and have had a chance to indicate their preference. These interactions enable the planning team to do their work with adequate data about the support and concerns of those who can facilitate or block school improvement.

Resources for Readiness

The success of readiness activities depends very much on the availability of several key resources:

A Budget

A budget needs to approved by the central office to cover the cost of such things as materials, consultants (for awareness activities and information about possible programs), site visits to study possible improvement programs, and release time for staff members. These funds should be managed by the school planning team and the principal.

Release Time for Staff

The entire staff, but particularly the planning team, will need release time to participate in team building, goal setting, and program selection. This time can be provided through a variety of means, such as district inservice days, paid summer work, and selective use of substitute teachers.

A Facilitator

A school needs at least one person (though preferably more than one) who is prepared to guide the staff through a systematic school improvement process that includes team building and goal setting. Most districts will need to identify an effective school improvement process and then have a person from the district or from each school trained to facilitate that process. While the cost of having a person serve as facilitator and training that person may seem high, not having such a person usually results in limited change. To achieve real improvement, schools need someone who knows what to do and when, how, and why to do it.

The Principal and a District Administrator

The principal of the school and an administrator from the district's central office should be active members of the planning team. By participating fully in team activities, the principal demonstrates to the staff the importance and seriousness of the process of school improvement. This involvement also makes it likely that the principal will actively support the goals for school improvement.

The participation of a central office administrator provides the school with an advocate at the district level. It also provides the planning team with a member who can bring in district specialists in curriculum and instruction or outside consultants to assist the team as it makes decisions about goals and programs in particular areas (e.g., reading, mathematics, multicultural education, gifted education).

District Curriculum Specialists

District curriculum specialists should be available to assist in identifying possible improvement goals and locating promising programs and practices. The role of local curriculum and staff development specialists should change from determining improvements to serving as a resource to schools.

The Results of Readiness

At the end of the Readiness stage, the school has clearly articulated its improvement goals and programs. If this three- to six-month process has been conducted systematically, most staff members support the decisions that have been made and are eager to plan and then participate in inservice training to achieve their goals. Moreover, the entire school community has a new mindset. They are, as the name of this stage implies, ready for what lies ahead. They are ready to learn, to practice, to give their all in their commitment to achieving their goals.

2
The Planning Stage

IN THE PLANNING STAGE, THE SCHOOL STAFF BUILDS ON THE improvement goals and programs identified in the Readiness stage, detailing how they will be achieved during the Training, Implementation, and Maintenance stages. The Planning tasks, like the Readiness tasks, tend to be highly sequenced, and the planning team usually takes responsibility for completing them. The tasks include conducting a needs assessment, identifying inservice objectives and activities, and laying out a detailed plan and time line for school improvement and staff development (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982)

Conditions Essential to Planning

Planning school-based staff development is like designing a new school building. Ideally, the process of designing a school begins with an architect who has the expertise to work with representatives of the teachers, administrators, and other school personnel who will eventually be housed there. The educators' responsibility is to identify what they want to happen in the school once it is built, and the architect's responsibility is to design the building to accommodate the educators' needs. When schools are planned in this collaborative way, those who helped clarify their vision of what should happen in the new building believe the school is truly theirs and are committed to working there. Even though plans may be modified during the course of construction or after the school has been built, the collaborative nature of the endeavor helps preserve the feelings of ownership.

In school-based staff development, a primary goal throughout the Readiness and Planning stages is to develop similar feelings of ownership related to specific improvements in school practices that affect student learning. To obtain this level of ownership and commitment, four conditions are necessary:

1. The school needs a facilitator, an "architect": someone who is skilled in planning, knowledgeable about the proposed improvements identified in the Readiness stage, and able to facilitate the development of a long-term school improvement plan.
2. The people who will be affected by the improvements need to have input into selecting which improvement goals and programs will be adopted.
3. Those who provide input also need to believe that their ideas and suggestions were considered and used in the final school improvement plan.
4. Representatives of those who will implement the changes should be involved in writing the school improvement plan (Withall and Wood 1979).

These conditions are first considered in the Readiness stage, and they are carefully addressed as the planning team prepares a written plan for achieving the school's improvement goals.

Key Planning Tasks

The Planning stage is composed of five major tasks: (1) involving the planning team and school faculty in defining the specifics of what will happen in the school when the improvements are in place; (2) conducting a needs assessment; (3) identifying the resources available to support the long-range inservice and improvements; (4) developing a five-year inservice plan and time line for implementing the school's improvement goals; and (5) obtaining faculty and district approval of the written school improvement plan. Teachers and administrators work together to complete these tasks, and the planning team serves as the representative working group that develops and writes the plan for the school faculty (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982).

1. Defining Specific Objectives

The Planning stage begins with a systematic analysis of the goals, programs, and practices identified in the Readiness stage. The purpose of this analysis is to determine what teachers, administrators, students, and others should know and be able to do when the desired improvements are finally in place (Charters and Jones 1974). The outcomes that are identified during this analysis fall into three areas (Wood, Thompson, and Russell 1981):

- **Knowledge:** learning and using specific content. For example, if one of the improvement goals is for students to learn more about technology and how to use it, teachers must acquire knowledge about technology.
- **Skills or strategies:** new procedures for teaching, such as using cooperative learning, mastery learning, or inquiry teaching. Objectives for administrators might include new procedures for conducting classroom observations or clinical supervision.
- **Attitudes:** commitments, values, and other affective variables. For instance, if team teaching is to be effective, teachers must be willing to work closely with their colleagues in planning lessons.

The specific outcomes identified provide the basis for a needs assessment, since they represent the ideal conditions for putting the improvements in place.

2. Conducting a Needs Assessment

A needs assessment provides the school planning team with information about what teachers and administrators will need to learn to implement the improvement programs. It identifies the difference between the knowledge, skills, and attitudes desired when the school improvements are in place and the current conditions in the school (Charters and Jones 1974). This gap between "what is" and "what should be" is typically defined as "inservice needs" (Wood 1989), and members of the planning team must identify procedures for gathering data to determine these needs.

The kinds of questionnaires typically used to assess inservice needs (those focusing on broad areas or topics) don't work well here because the information they provide

is not specific enough. Direct classroom observation, school materials and documents, and interviews are more likely to provide reliable information about what is currently known and done in the school and what needs to be learned and done to fulfill the school's improvement goals and programs. Questionnaires may be used, but the items should relate to the specific objectives defined by the ideal practices. Multiple sources of data provide the best information about the learning needs of the school staff (Wood 1984).

The needs assessment gives the planning team a list of the skills, understandings, and attitudes that must be developed if the desired improvements are to be achieved. These, then, become the objectives for the inservice training and the basis for determining which inservice activities and programs are most appropriate (Wood, Thompson, and Russell 1981).

3. Identifying Available Resources

Before the planning team members can decide how to proceed with the school improvement plan, they need to know what resources are available and whether there are any limitations that will affect the plan. The resources available affect what kind of training is possible, the time line for conducting training, and the kind and degree of implementation. For instance, if funds are limited and the materials and equipment available for a particular science program will cover the needs of only ten teachers each year, the improvement plan should call for training only ten teachers per year. Should the cost of hiring outside consultants to conduct an inservice program be very high, the plan may call for a few teachers in the school or district to be trained in depth and then for those teachers to become trainers of their peers (Wood 1989). Resources are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

4. Developing a Five-Year Plan

After identifying the available resources, the planning team members are ready to prepare a written five-year plan for conducting training and implementing improved practices and programs. They should not approach this

task alone, however. The key to developing an effective plan is to make good use of the expertise available to the team. Here is where the central office curriculum generalists, subject matter specialists, and staff developers support the team's efforts by providing information about planning, staff development, and curriculum development in the areas where improvement is proposed (e.g., reading, science, or multicultural education). If this expertise is not available in the district, then the central office must help the planning team obtain the services of outside consultants.

The written plan should lay out the specific activities and time line for the first year and provide a general plan for the remaining four years (Wood 1989, Dillon-Peterson and Greenwald 1980, Sergiovanni and Starratt 1979), including a discussion of the following:

- The specific goals and programs identified for school improvement
- The process used to develop the improvement goals and programs
- Data showing why these goals and programs were given top priority
- The inservice programs and implementation procedures
- Strategies for helping staff members transfer new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to their professional practice
- A time line for inservice and implementation
- Expected outcomes during each of the five years covered by the plan
- Data that will be provided to report progress toward achieving the improvement goals
- The budget required to support this plan

The written plan is meant to inform teachers, administrators, and the community about what has been decided, how they have been and will be involved, and how their ideas have been incorporated into the goals, programs, and implementation procedures. Before finalizing the plan, the planning team members review it and then take it to the peer feedback groups that were established in the Readiness stage. They complete this review process at least once and probably several times before presenting it to the entire staff and the central office for formal approval.

5. Gaining Formal Approval of the Five-Year Plan

Following any revisions to the plan based on reactions from the peer feedback groups, the planning team develops and implements a strategy for obtaining approval of the plan, first from the school faculty and then from the central office. Developing a strategy for obtaining approval is as crucial as developing improvement goals and a plan for achieving those goals.

The process of obtaining faculty approval should include formal feedback concerning the degree of support for the specific activities and programs included in the plan. Whenever possible, the process should include asking faculty members to indicate both the degree to which they support the plan and the degree to which they are willing to become involved in participating in the proposed inservice activities. Support for a plan is one level of commitment; personal involvement indicates a much higher level of commitment (Wood and McQuarrie 1984).

Final approval of the school improvement plan comes from the central office level. This formal approval should include public support of the plan and allocation of the funds necessary to implement it. In fact, unless both the board of education and central office leadership support the plan, the proposed school-based improvements and staff development will likely never become a reality.

While there is no one way to obtain approval of the plan by the central office and board of education, there are several things a school can do during the first two stages that facilitate such support:

- Involve central office administrators and school board members on the planning team and in the follow-up feedback groups described in Readiness, so there are knowledgeable support advocates for the plan when it is submitted for final approval.

- Involve influential community and business leaders who are actively involved on the planning team and support the improvement plan, so there are advocates from the power structure of the community who will support and possibly help present the final plan to the central office and school board.

• Make sure representatives of the district teachers and administrators organization or union are involved in the planning and approval process at the school level, so they support the final plan and any exceptions to the contracts between the school board and these organizations that have been approved.

• Schedule time during Readiness and Planning for the school principal or representatives from the planning team to brief key central office administrators on tentative and final decisions, so the central office is aware of what decisions are being made, has a chance to react and understand and have input into those decisions, and will not be surprised about any aspect of the final written plan developed by the school.

• Include the district curriculum specialists in Readiness and Planning, so they are involved in identifying and selecting the new programs and practices and are committed to helping the school implement the improvement plans.

• Establish and communicate clear procedures and criteria for approval of the school improvement plan so they are understood by the school faculty, district administrators, and school board prior to initiating the Readiness stage.

Resources for Planning

A Facilitator

As with Readiness, it is important for the school to have a facilitator who has been trained in school improvement processes. Good facilitators skillfully guide teachers and administrators through a systematic planning process. They also know how to involve central office personnel and outside consultants as the planning team makes decisions about specific inservice programs and activities that will help the staff implement the school's improvement goals.

District Specialists

Those involved in writing the five-year plan should have access to district specialists in curriculum, instruction, and staff development who have expertise in areas where the school is proposing changes. These district-level personnel are usually excellent sources of information about research and inservice programs, information that is essential to making good decisions about the training and implementation activities included in the school's written plan. If this expertise is not available within the district or from the facilitator, outside consultants should be provided to assist the planning team. Consultants may be located through local state-funded universities, regional education service agencies, the state department of education, or professional associations.

A Budget

Money must be allocated to support such things as planning time for school personnel, the purchase of materials, and the hiring of consultants. It is important to note here that the money available to the school for implementing the *entire* improvement plan must be allocated before the committee can make final decisions about what the plan will include. The available money and the ability to reallocate money available for other things in the school (e.g., books, equipment, substitute teachers) will define the limits of what the school improvement plan can realistically include. As noted in Readiness, the allocation of funds available to the school for planning is one of the first things that happens in this process of school improvement. For planning to be successful, the district needs to inform planning teams of the funds available to their school for staff development and program implementation. The district also needs to have procedures that allow individual schools to negotiate funding limits to support their improvement plans.

Trainers

A final resource that must be provided in this stage is access to trainers for the inservice activities included in the

plan. Either a budget must be established to cover the costs of trainers from outside the district or funding must be provided to train local school personnel to serve as trainers. Usually the latter approach is more cost- effective when long-term training and implementation are required.

The Results of Planning

At the end of this stage, the school has a written plan for achieving its improvement goals over a five-year period. The planning team has identified the inservice needs of teachers and administrators, selected specific inservice activities, determined the time line for conducting those activities, allocated resources, and obtained support for implementation. The central office and board of education have approved and funded the plan and are ready to assist the school in carrying it out. Moreover, staff members are firmly committed to specific improvement goals for their school. Their ownership of the blueprint for school improvement is complete, and they have secured the resources to make their blueprint a reality.

3
The Training Stage

THE TRAINING STAGE OF SCHOOL-BASED STAFF DEVELOPMENT IS commonly referred to as "inservice training." Many teachers and administrators have confused inservice training—that is, participating in workshops, listening to presenters, and attending conferences—with staff development. But it is not until Training that these and other learning experiences become the focus of the RPTIM staff development process. It is here that inservice training programs are selected, planned, scheduled, and implemented (Wood 1989).

Prior to Training, the staff development process focuses on developing a vision, setting improvement goals, building commitment, and planning for systematic change. It is true that Readiness and Planning require attending meetings and workshops, but those experiences are intended to enable the members of the school planning team to carry out their roles in the first two stages. The purpose of Training is to conduct inservice learning experiences that will enable the staff to improve current practice and achieve the school improvement goals identified in the previous two stages of staff development. In fact, what occurs during this stage is determined by the decisions made in the previous two stages.

What We Know About How Adults Learn

Teaching and learning are emphasized during this stage; that is helping the school faculty learn new instructional skills, professional practices, attitudes, and roles. Planning and conducting inservice training is very

much like what classroom teachers do when they plan and conduct instruction for elementary and secondary students, with one important difference: the people doing the learning are adults. Clearly, elementary and secondary teachers need to know how children and young people learn so they can plan and use instruction that encourages learning. Logically, then, when planning inservice training for teachers and administrators, we should be aware of what is known about adult learners and use that information to structure effective inservice activities and programs. Here are some key points to remember (Wood and Thompson 1980):

Adults will commit to learning when they perceive the specified goals and objectives as realistic and important to them.

All adults learn, retain, and use what they perceive is relevant to their personal and professional needs. Teachers and administrators are no exception. They need to believe that what they will learn is related to their job and has immediate application. Thus, the content and structure of inservice learning experiences should be such that educators readily see the connection between the training and their job.

Adult learning involves the ego.

Asking a teacher or administrator to learn and then implement a new skill, technique, or concept may promote a more or less positive view of self. There is always the fear of external judgment when learning with the intent to use something new; this produces anxiety during inservice training. While it is logical that one will feel inadequate and uncomfortable when learning and first using some new teaching or administrative technique, these feelings are seldom acknowledged when adults are involved in learning experiences that often require significant changes in professional behavior. Given the potential for these feelings, learning experiences for the adult learner need to be structured in ways that provide support from peers and the instructor and reduce the fear of judgment by those who evaluate the learner in the work setting.

Adults need concrete, direct experience where they practice what they are learning.

It appears that a higher proportion of adults than formerly thought are operating at the stage of thinking that Piaget called the concrete operations stage (an emphasis on skills and concrete activity) or are moving toward the formal operations stage (an emphasis on formal patterns of thinking and logical, rational strategies). It also appears that adult learners who are at formal operations often revert to concrete operations when learning things that will require major changes in their behavior. This suggests that concrete, direct experiences should be part of adult learning (Thompson and Wood 1982).

Experiential learning allows inservice participants to tie the understandings they have developed to concrete experiences they can readily draw on when faced with similar situations after Training. Because the principles and skills developed through practice are tied to a sequence of personal actions and consequences, they are remembered more easily than if they were simply discussed. Experiential learning also has a positive effect on attitudes toward what is learned (Bem 1972) and helps learners develop a better understanding of how the different pieces of what they are learning fit into a whole, a gestalt (Wood 1989). Finally, what is learned by doing is more likely to be applied in the job setting.

Adults need feedback.

Part of the support during learning should include feedback on learners' progress toward goals. Like all learners, those in inservice training need to see the results of their efforts and receive feedback about how well they are doing. Providing plenty of opportunities for teachers and administrators to try out what they are learning creates opportunities for the structured feedback that helps inservice participants refine new behaviors and make real progress toward their goals. The need for feedback is reflected in questions like "How am I doing?" or "What did I do wrong there?" Feedback can be provided by a peer, a group of learners, or the trainer.

Most adults learn more in small groups.

Researchers have found that adults who participate in small learning groups are more likely to move their cognitive learning beyond understanding to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (I/D/E/A 1971). Small-group activities provide opportunities for adults to share, reflect, analyze, and generalize from their new learning and experiences.

Adults come to learning with a wide range of differences.

While adults have many things in common, they come to learning with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, self-direction, interests, and competence. Instruction for any group of adults must recognize the diversity of the group, taking into account such things as specific individual needs, knowledge, and readiness to learn. Assuming that all adults will be ready to learn the same thing at the same time in the same way is likely to miss the mark in much the same way it does for children and young people.

Adults want to have some control over what they learn.

Adults want to be the originators of their own learning—that is, be involved in selecting objectives, content, activities, and assessment. They will reject learning situations, which they view as attacks on their professional competence, and they will reject prescriptions by others, which imply that their current practices are inappropriate or inadequate. Adults are more positive about their learning experiences when they have some control over the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their learning.

Adults are basically self-motivated.

Adults generally motivate themselves; all one can do is encourage and create conditions that will nurture what already exists within the adult. Adults are motivated by their commitments, interests, and concerns; these "hot buttons" generate a desire to learn and improve. In addition, providing opportunities for personal recognition,

achievement, and increased responsibility can motivate adults to do more than the minimum expected of them.

Adults do not automatically transfer learning from training to practice.

The transfer of learning from training to actual use on the job must be planned for and facilitated (Joyce and Showers 1982). Inservice participants transfer learning from training to daily practice through systematic planning and a commitment to use what they have learned. Only through regular practice accompanied by coaching and feedback will inservice participants fully integrate new practices into their daily behavior.

* * *

In this brief discussion of adult learning, we have identified several important factors that should be considered when planning and delivering inservice training. Please note that, with limited exception, what we know about learning in children and young people also applies to adults. The absence of such concepts as the use of reinforcement and anticipatory set in the previous discussion is not to suggest they do not apply to the adult learner. The points discussed here are simply those most essential to the success of inservice training.

Key Training Tasks

There are four key tasks in the Training stage: (1) selecting and designing an effective inservice program, (2) selecting experienced trainers, (3) scheduling the inservice activities, and (4) ensuring participation by the principal and other administrators. All of these tasks should respond to what we know about how adults learn (Wood 1989, Wood and Thompson 1980).

1. Selecting an Effective Inservice Program

The first task is to select an inservice program; if it is a packaged program, modify it as necessary to ensure that it

is consistent with what is known about adult learning. An effective inservice program has five basic characteristics:

- It includes small-group activities or team learning.
- It gives participants some degree of choice or control over their learning during training.
- It includes experiential activities that encourage participants to try out new behaviors and techniques.
- It includes peer and trainer coaching.
- It concludes with participants developing an action plan for implementing what they have learned.

We will look at each of these characteristics.

Small-group activities or team learning. Small-group activities (three to six participants) serve several important functions. First, they move cognitive learning to the application level and beyond. Small groups also provide participants an opportunity to share and reflect on what they are learning and experiencing. By sharing experiences and insights during small-group discussions, educators expand what they learn and begin to identify concrete applications of what they will eventually do when they make use of their learning on the job (I/D/E/A 1971, Tough 1967, Johnson and Johnson 1980).

Small groups also provide personal and psychological support for teachers and administrators who are being asked to learn and implement new professional practices and programs. Since everyone in a group is in the same situation, some of the isolation and frustration can be addressed by sharing concerns and feelings. Participants recognize that others in the group are experiencing the same problems they are and that they all can help one another through the learning experience.

Of course, group learning assumes that people are prepared to learn together, which usually is not true. The first small-group activity should be team-building activities similar to those identified for the planning team in Chapter 1. Team-building activities should be conducted at the start of any inservice training program that includes small-group work.

Choice or control over learning. Choices may occur at two levels (Dillon-Peterson and Hammer 1980, Massey 1980,

Wood 1989). The first is a choice of whether to participate in the inservice activity or program. This choice may be based on the perceived appropriateness of the content and objectives of the inservice, the nature of the learning experiences, the person's feelings about the trainer, the time of the training, or the location of the training. Voluntary participation gives learners a real feeling of control over their own professional growth and leads to increased commitment to participate fully in inservice activities.

The second level of choice relates to providing participants an inservice program with options about what, how, where, when, and with whom they learn. Even when participation is required, there are a variety of ways to give educators opportunities to make important choices and, thus, control their learning. For example, they may select specific objectives, the materials they will use, or the way they will demonstrate mastery of what they have learned.

Choices at either level are important to the success of the inservice training. They can make the difference between participants' having a positive approach to training or a negative one.

Experiential Activities. Providing opportunities for participants to practice what they are learning is an essential part of inservice training (Thompson and Wood 1982, Wood and Thompson 1980, Joyce and Showers 1982). Experiential activities usually include simulations or actual experiences in real school settings. Such experiences should be preceded by an opportunity to learn about a particular teaching or administrative practice, followed by observation(s) of an expert modeling that practice. With this background, participants should plan and actually try out what they have learned and observed. These trial experiences should occur several times during Training and become the basis for personal and group analysis. Repeated practice, followed by reflection, analysis, and discussion in small groups is an extremely productive means of helping teachers and administrators master new professional behaviors. Most staff development programs, however, have not included such activities.

Peer and trainer coaching. The use of coaching to provide feedback for inservice participants who are practicing new professional behaviors is also an important component of effective inservice training. When peers and trainers observe a practice session and then provide specific information about what they saw, learners gain valuable information that enables them to monitor their progress toward mastering intended outcomes. Through feedback from a coach, inservice participants can determine what they are doing that is consistent with what they have seen modeled. They can also identify what they need to work on during the next practice session.

Coaching also provides data that can be used by teachers and administrators to develop understanding and insight related to the content, concepts, or practices they are learning. Without access to data from coaches, inservice participants may lack the information to fully understand and internalize their learning and to translate that learning into appropriate practice (Joyce and Showers 1982). Feedback from peers, especially those in small learning groups, also provides support and reinforcement during the early, awkward time of trying out new professional behaviors.

While the feedback provided by peer coaches is helpful to the person observed, it is equally effective in producing new insights and understandings for the coaches. As participants observe practice sessions and then analyze and prepare to provide feedback to their peers, they identify specific examples of what is supposed to happen and what is actually happening. This analysis, plus organizing the data to present it to their colleagues, is an excellent learning experience. Thus, participants should have opportunities to both coach and be coached during inservice sessions (Withall and Wood 1979).

Developing individual action plans. Inservice training should close with participants developing an "action plan" for implementation (Wood 1989). Although there are no hard-and-fast rules about how detailed this written plan should be and what it must include, an action plan should clearly describe how the learner plans to transfer new professional behaviors into daily practice. Generally, it

specifies in as much detail as possible personal objectives, activities, time lines, resources, and needs for follow-up assistance.

To promote the transfer of learning from training to practice, action plans should be developed during the latter part of an inservice program; however, the expectation that such a plan will be developed and then implemented should be established at the start of the inservice program and referred to periodically throughout the inservice activities.

Once participants have developed their action plans, they should share them with one another, critiquing each plan individually. This sharing and critiquing expands the number of concrete applications of what has been learned, develops a public commitment to use what has been learned, and allows colleagues to help one another improve their plans (Bem 1972). Inservice participants will eventually share their plans with the trainer, supervisor, or person(s) who will monitor and assist with the implementation stage.

2. Selecting Experienced Trainers

The second task in the Training stage is to select trainers who have the expertise to facilitate inservice programs. To the extent possible, local (same school or district) peer trainers having the same job duties as inservice participants should be employed (Wood, Thompson, and Russell 1981). Using local educators as trainers has several advantages. First, it takes some of the threat out of the training because peer trainers have instant credibility with the participants. For example, teachers know that other local teachers understand their problems and that they can ask these peer trainers frank questions or admit problems to them without fear of judgment. They also know they can get practical, concrete advice based on experience. The fact is, teachers almost always go to other teachers for help with their professional problems, as principals go to other principals, and superintendents to other superintendents.

Use of local trainers also reduces the cost of delivering inservice programs by diminishing the need for consultants over the long term. And because local trainers are more

likely to be available when needed, and understand the local conditions that may require the content and delivery of an inservice program to be modified, their use increases the availability and adaptability of training to local needs.

A preference for local trainers does not outweigh the need for trainers to have the expertise required to facilitate inservice training. Expertise is the first criterion in the selection of any trainer (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982). If local personnel do not have the knowledge, skills, and experiences to conduct the inservice programs, then outside consultants should be used until local trainers can be adequately prepared.

3. Scheduling the Inservice Activities

The third Training task is to schedule the inservice activities for the school faculty and determine other learning opportunities that will enable them to implement the changes identified for the school in the Readiness and Planning stages.

Inservice activities don't always have to occur in the school itself. Workshops and other inservice programs may be conducted in the school, at a regional or county education service agency, in a university, or at a national workshop or conference. As long as the participants in these programs are focusing on school improvement goals and objectives, inservice training may be thought of as school-based.

4. Ensuring Participation by the Principal and Other Administrators

It is important that the principal and other key administrators participate in inservice training with those they supervise (Berman and McLaughlin 1978; Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982; Sly 1992); this is the final task in this stage. If teachers are to believe that inservice training is worth their time, the principal must have participated or be participating in that training with them. When a principal is absent from an inservice session, staff members immediately think, "This session must not be very important." Although this may be a faulty perception, it is one held by many educators.

Participation also prepares the principal and administrators to understand and be able to support those they supervise and coach after the inservice training. It helps them understand the necessary changes in administrative and instructional practices and the difficulties staff members are encountering as they try to change their professional behaviors. Finally, this participation gives administrators credibility by making them a real and visible part of the school improvement efforts.

Resources for Training

An Expert on Inservice Training

Every school should have at least one person who is knowledgeable about effective inservice training and can assist the principal and staff in identifying, modifying, and scheduling their inservice education programs and in using central office personnel to deliver training. This could be the same person who facilitated the first two stages, or someone new could serve in this role.

In some school districts, members of the central office staff are responsible for planning and implementing inservice programs. District staff development units should be a resource to a school, assisting them in planning, delivering, and evaluating inservice programs that focus on the school's goals for improvement. The mission of a district staff development unit should focus on helping principals and teachers achieve their school improvement goals through inservice programs. District inservice leaders should serve and respond to, not determine, the needs of a school.

Skilled Inservice Trainers

Access to skilled inservice trainers is essential to the success of any staff development program. As mentioned earlier, one way of ensuring availability is to train local teachers and administrators. Another is to catalogue the trainers already available in the district, other area school districts, service units, local colleges and universities, and

other education agencies who are prepared to deliver inservice training related to the school's improvement goals.

The Full Participation of the Principal and Other Administrators

While school administrators are busy people, their involvement in training activities is an important resource, for it says to everyone, "What we are doing to improve practice is important. It warrants the time we're spending on it." The active involvement of administrators will likely lend momentum to the improvement process, whereas a lack of involvement will almost certainly choke the process.

Time

Time is perhaps the most important resource for professional learning. It takes time to read, to attend workshops, to participate in inservice meetings, to simply think about teaching and learning. While most teachers have become masters of managing their time, staff development is more likely to be successful and effective if it is supported with release time to carry out the daily activities of study and learning, because significant professional learning requires just as much physical and emotional energy as the activities of the regular work day.

Of concern is not only day-to-day time, but the time it will take to implement the entire school improvement plan and see significant change. Although most plans require four to seven years of work, some schools still behave as if they can achieve successful school reform by deciding in June that their school will open in September with a dramatically different structure using dramatically different instructional practices. A school is a complex of values, attitudes, policies, practices, and expectations that are part of a giant web of learned culture. Everything in it is connected to everything else there. While it may be possible to tinker with the system over a few weeks or months, significant change occurs only when a school works for several years to make it happen.

The need for adequate time to implement change should not be interpreted as a license to move slowly. On the contrary, change is urgently needed, and we should get

on with it. We should remember, however, that the magnitude of change needed will require sustained, long-term effort. Members of the board of education and policymakers who are concerned with accountability should recognize the need for time to make real improvement in educational practice.

A Budget

A budget for inservice training should have been established during the Planning stage. Training expenses may include:

- Workshop fees
- Conference registration fees
- Travel expenses (for conferences and school site visits)
- Consultants' fees
- Outside trainers' fees
- Training of local trainers
- Training materials (handouts, pens, pencils, paper, etc.)
- Substitute teachers (for occasional release time)

Some learning activities require very little financial commitment. Others, like training teachers to use computers for classroom presentations, can mean eye-popping expenditures for equipment and meeting space. Prepackaged or professionally marketed staff development programs have clearly defined costs.

Space, Equipment, and Materials

There should be space available in the school for staff development training, and that space should have the equipment and materials necessary for training to take place: for instance, pencils, paper, markers, overhead projector, VCR, tape recorder.

The Results of Training

At the end of Training, the school, with the assistance of district staff development and curriculum personnel, has access to effective inservice programs that reflect what is

known about adult learners and address what the faculty need to learn to implement their improvement plans. Trainers are in place to support inservice training, and the faculty have participated in inservice learning experiences with the principal and have learned new professional behaviors that they plan to implement once they return to their instructional or administrative responsibilities.

When this stage is completed, the teaching and learning program for adult learners is in place, the instruction has been completed, and now it is time to transfer the new learnings into daily practice.

4
The Implementation Stage

IN THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS move from learning in the controlled setting of inservice training to adjusting, adapting, and internalizing what they have learned, making it part of their daily work activities (Wood 1989). What occurs during Implementation depends on what was learned during the Training stage; it is here that the vision, goals, and practices identified in Readiness and Planning actually take form and become observable in the school.

Systematic implementation remains one of the most neglected stages of the RPTIM staff development process (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982; Sly, Everett, McQuarrie, and Wood 1989) because many educators assume that teachers and administrators will automatically transfer what they have learned into their professional activities. This assumption of automatic transfer is flawed and inconsistent with what we know about change and adult learners (see the discussion of adult learners in Chapter 2). Teachers and administrators are not likely to rush out of an inservice meeting and immediately and independently put their new knowledge into practice, especially if doing so requires substantial changes in the way they carry our their professional responsibilities.

Implementation is like a new pilot completing a solo flight. As with the new pilot who has gone through extensive training and practice to develop the skills and attitudes required to fly a plane successfully, educators go through a phase where they solo. Solo experiences for educators come when they return to their school and begin to

implement new skills, knowledge, and professional behaviors. Unless organized follow-up experiences are provided after training, neither the pilot nor the educator is totally prepared to use the skills, knowledge, and practices acquired during the training activities.

In the early 1970s, researchers described a major problem with the implementation of new programs and practices in schools: in many of the schools they studied, no significant changes in student achievement had occurred as a result of an improvement program. After looking more closely at what was occurring in these schools, educators discovered that the new programs or practices had never been used in the schools, even though the perception was that these schools had implemented changes. Charters and Jones (1974) coined the term "non-events" to describe this phenomenon.

Why, after staff members have agreed to implement a change and received the requisite training, do many innovations become non-events? Non-events occur because most staff development plans make no provisions for the transfer of learning from inservice training to professional practice in the school. Teachers and administrators say they often become excited about a new program, participate in the required training, and go back to their school ready to use what they have learned. But as they begin trying to incorporate their learning into their work, they run into problems and become frustrated in their efforts to change. Gradually, the problems win out, and teachers and administrators go back to familiar ways of working, forgetting the new practices they had been so excited about.

Transfer of learning becomes a problem only if the need for transfer goes unrecognized. Often the conditions of the school and classroom are different from those of the training situation. Teachers, for instance, cannot simply walk into a classroom ready to use everything they have learned in training (Joyce and Showers 1982); when teachers are learning a new instructional skill, they need to realize they will probably have to consciously adapt it to fit the subject matter, their personality, and the needs of their students.

As we discuss in Chapter 3, the transfer of adult learning must be planned for and then facilitated. Educators need extensive practice in their work setting with accompanying feedback from peers or consultants in order to make new practices a natural and automatic part of their professional behavior. This need for practice with support and feedback is consistent with the needs of adult learners. Because adults almost always feel awkward and less effective when they're trying out new ideas, they need support, feedback, and helpful encouragement from peers and others to help them continue their efforts to improve their professional practice (Joyce and Showers 1982).

Key Implementation Tasks

The need for an implementation stage becomes immediately clear to educators when they return to their classroom or school after inservice training. Suddenly, they realize the school is quite different from the inservice setting. Materials and equipment are not in place or are not organized as they were during Training. The classroom is not set up like the one in the inservice program. And the students are as challenging as ever. Moreover, students have not experienced or probably aren't prepared for the new approaches teachers will be using.

While those trained have learned what they were supposed to learn, they are not entirely comfortable with the new practices. These new practices have not been integrated into daily activities, nor are they used automatically.

The principal plays a primary role in implementation (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982; Wood and Kleine 1988; Sly 1992). In fact, it is the principal's job to facilitate and coordinate the three key tasks in this stage (Wood 1989, Sly 1992, Goins 1991): providing necessary assistance, providing recognition and reward, and providing adequate resources.

1. Providing Necessary Assistance

The first task is to provide teachers and administrators the assistance they need to transfer their new learning into

practice. The development and sharing of action plans at the end of the Training stage should have provided the principal and others assisting in follow-up support with an overview of what is needed. As staff members try to introduce what they have learned into their classrooms or administrative activities, the principal and at least some teachers should be prepared to provide follow-up support to staff members (Joyce and Showers 1982, Goldsbury 1980, Wood and Kleine 1989).

Strategies for Providing Follow-Up Support. Educators can use a variety of strategies to help integrate new knowledge, skills, and attitudes into their professional practice. Such strategies enable them to (1) become aware of what they are doing that is consistent with expected practice and (2) identify specific ways to improve their professional practice. In other words, the assistance provided should both reinforce what educators are already doing well and identify problem areas. Such assistance should be recognized as supervision in the best sense: a way to help teachers and administrators adapt and integrate what they have learned into their day-to day activities (McQuarrie and Wood 1991).

Some of the more common ways to provide follow-up support include:

- Trainer observation of staff members at work in the school
- On-call observations by peers
- Observations by the principal and other supervisors
- Meetings of inservice participants with trainers to share successful experiences and seek solutions to problems
- After-school sharing sessions for those who are implementing the same practices
- Reviews of audiotapes or videotapes of colleagues in the work setting
- Newsletters that share successful practice and answer questions raised by teachers and administrators.

Coaching. Although sharing and problem-solving sessions are helpful, direct observation with feedback from a knowledgeable peer, administrator, supervisor, or trainer

is the most effective means of transferring professional learning into practice. Those providing such feedback are called "coaches," and the process of observation and feedback is called "coaching" (Joyce and Showers 1982; Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982). Good coaches are knowledgeable about and have had experience with the specific program or practice a staff member is trying to implement. They observe the staff member in the work environment and then provide specific feedback about behaviors that support the person's intended professional practice and behaviors that still need to be practiced and refined.

It is important for coaches to have mastered both the practices they observe and the systematic process of coaching. Just as trainers must be prepared to facilitate inservice, so must coaches be prepared to carry out their responsibilities. Coaches may be trained at the same time as the local trainers. In some districts, the local peer trainers have also been trained to provide follow-up coaching.

The preparation and selection of coaches should not be left to chance. A school or district should identify an experienced facilitator to train a cadre of district personnel to serve as coaches. The staff should have the opportunity to volunteer or be nominated by their peers based on the criteria previously described. Efforts should be made to have some coaches trained before implementation begins. As other faculty in the school become competent and confident regarding the change, additional coaches should be identified and trained.

Communication. The entire staff, including those not implementing new practices, should be aware of the specific strategies that will be used to support the transfer of learning. Even though these strategies have probably been outlined in the written school improvement plan and reviewed during the inservice training, the principal and other faculty members involved should take the time to give periodic formal and informal progress reports, perhaps at faculty meetings, through a faculty newsletter, or simply through conversations with staff members.

2. Providing Recognition and Reward

Another important task during implementation is to ensure that staff members who are making the effort to change their professional practice are recognized and rewarded (Dillon-Peterson and Hammer 1980, Sly 1992). School improvement is difficult and time-consuming, and the educators implementing changes will appreciate being praised for their efforts. During difficult times, especially, recognition of some sort can motivate educators to persist in their efforts to improve.

Principals must make a concerted effort to know which teachers and administrators in their schools are in the process of integrating their inservice learning into practice. They can do so by reviewing action plans developed at the end of Training, interacting with teachers during formal and informal meetings, and observing classroom activities. Information about who is doing what should be readily available to principals, since they are constantly monitoring the school's progress toward achieving its improvement goals.

It is important for a principal to determine what kinds of recognition and reward are possible in the district and are meaningful to the teachers and administrators involved. Here are some ways a principal might provide recognition:

- Encourage staff members to use faculty meetings to share their successes.
- Ask a successful teacher to talk with the rest of the faculty about what she's doing or ask if she'd mind if other teachers observed her at work.
- Send teachers written congratulations on a job well done, and encourage teachers to send one another congratulatory notes.
- Invite central office administrators to visit the school and observe a successful new program or practice.
- Ask staff members to write articles for the district or community newspaper about what they're doing.

Recognition and reward may also take the form of additional responsibility (Herzberg 1959). For example, the principal might ask those who have successfully implemented new practices to be trained to serve as peer trainers and peer coaches. Or he might ask them to make a

presentation to the school staff, the board of education, parents, or professional groups.

For recognition and reward to be well received, they must be valued by teachers and administrators; thus, the principal and others who are in a position to reward and recognize staff members must know what staff members value. Of course, principals who know the faculty well are more likely to be able to identify rewards that meet each staff member's unique needs. For instance, a principal may realize that a second-year teacher with a family to support would most welcome a monetary reward, whereas a twenty-year veteran may prefer additional materials for her class or extra planning time.

Asking teachers and administrators what kind of recognition and reward they'd like to receive takes some of the burden off the principal. The staff members involved in implementing school improvement can brainstorm a list of ideas, rank them from most desirable to least desirable, and then present the list to the central office to determine which are possible and acceptable. The results of this process provide the school with a set of possibilities that can be used by the principals, administrators, and teachers as they support and encourage the implementation of improvements in their school. Because the list was generated by the faculty, it represents what they value, and they own those options. It also provides a wide range of options that are likely to address individual differences among the staff.

Some examples of rewards that districts have used include tuition for graduate courses, covering the cost of attending inservice or professional meetings, release time for team planning, and additional personal days.

3. Providing Adequate Resources

Although adequate resources should have been outlined and budgeted for in the written plan developed during the Planning stage, it is important to ensure that they are actually available to support the use of what has been learned (Wood 1989, Sly 1992). Typical resources might include:

- Print materials
- Audio and video equipment
- Release time for coaching, group problem solving, attending follow-up workshops
- Substitute teachers
- Consultants
- Access to curriculum experts in the district's central office

The "Resources for Implementation" section later in this chapter describes essential resources in detail. Without access to these resources, implementation will be limited and staff commitment to school improvement will dissipate.

To increase the probability of successful school improvement, educators should plan inservice training and implementation consistent with the available resources (Thompson 1982, Sly 1992). For example, if a school has enough funding each year to train ten teachers to implement one new program for improvement, then the schools should train ten teachers, not try to train the entire faculty with inadequate resources.

The Key Role of Principals in Implementation

Principals are essential to successful implementation. As one reviews what occurs in this stage, it becomes obvious that principals play a primary role (Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982; Wood and Kleine 1988; Sly 1992). Even though principals' responsibilities are noted throughout this chapter, they are so crucial to successful implementation that we will restate them here. Principals must ensure that the faculty have access to the follow-up assistance they need. They must facilitate coaching and organize meetings for people to share and solve problems. They must identify and bring in outside consultants, district supervisors, and administrators to support faculty when they encounter problems while using new professional practices. Principals may be directly involved in coaching and problem-solving meetings or simply ensure that such support is provided by others.

Principals are also responsible for the recognition and reward of faculty. Again, their role here is to ensure that

recognition and reward take place. Principals may themselves recognize and reward teachers, but they will more likely also facilitate the process through teachers, other leaders in the school, district administrators, and other people in and outside the district.

Finally, it is principals who ensure that resources are available and employed to support implementation. Working with the faculty, principals seek and find the human and physical resources needed to provide materials, equipment, time, consultants, and follow-up help required to successfully implement changes in their schools.

Resources for Implementation

Trained Coaches

Coaches are needed to give staff members feedback on how well they are using what they learned in training. With the appropriate training, teachers, administrators, and professional trainers can all be coaches. All they need is expertise in what they are coaching others to do and skill in conducting helpful observation and feedback sessions (Joyce and Showers 1982).

Time

As in the previous stages, time in the workday is also an important resource. Staff members need time to do the extra planning necessary to incorporate new learning into their work activities, to meet and share successes, and to help one another solve problems. Time is also essential to the coaching process, especially if teachers are coaching their colleagues during the school day.

The principal needs time to monitor who is implementing new practices, to observe and provide feedback, to facilitate sharing and problem-solving sessions, to coordinate and participate in coaching sessions, to ensure that staff members have the resources they need, to locate appropriate consultants and district specialists and coordinate their activities in the school, and to recognize and reward faculty for trying their best to use what they learned during inservice training.

A Budget

A budget to cover the costs associated with this stage should have been established during Planning. As we have noted already, materials, equipment, substitute teachers, the training of coaches, and rewards all cost money. The specific items included in this budget will vary, depending on the written plan developed during the Planning stage.

The Results of Implementation

By the end of the Implementation stage, staff members have transferred their learning from inservice training to professional practice. They have adapted new practices to the specific conditions of their work setting and are using them automatically in ways consistent with the intent of the school improvement plan.

Part of the school improvement plan is in place. Staff members have achieved some of their improvement goals, and they feel comfortable with—and are proud of—what they have accomplished: real and lasting improvement.

5
The Maintenance Stage

THE MAINTENANCE STAGE BEGINS WHEN TEACHERS AND administrators competently and comfortably use their new behaviors. They have mastered the tasks required to use a new program or set of professional practices and are using them appropriately in the context of their classroom or school. The focus of the Maintenance stage is ensuring that the changes implemented continue to be actively practiced over time (Wood, Thompson, and Russell 1981). Maintenance is also the stage where teachers continue to refine and extend their use of an innovation so that it has maximum impact on students and works well with the rest of the curriculum. At its best, Maintenance not only assures the endurance of a program years after implementation, but sets the stage for the next cycle of staff development by generating new concerns and needs.

The Maintenance stage is based on the belief that, in the absence of sustained support and attention, even successful efforts to change practice in schools will not endure. Think of a home gardener looking over her property during the midsummer months: The euphoria of the first blooms has passed, and now other activities compete for her time. The lure of these activities may draw the gardener away from tending her plants, allowing weeds and insects to attack and destroy her garden. Or she may remain true to the vision of color and beauty that inspired her efforts, persisting through the summer months and into the fall, weeding, fertilizing, judiciously pruning, moving plants to other locations when they fail to flourish. Her reward is not only lasting beauty, but an established bed of fertile soil for next spring's garden.

The successful staff developer, too, must keep in mind that school improvement efforts will slowly die away unless

they are given regular attention. Lack of time for reflection and the constant pressures of work during and after regular school hours often work together to push teachers and administrators back to their old habits and comfortable ways. In fact, because of a lack of overt maintenance, educators are usually not even aware that they have abandoned effective practices.

The more a new practice or program deviates from previous school norms or expectations, the more likely it is that educators will eventually slip into old habits. The fact that researchers consistently describe the pace of successful change in schools as slow and recursive should inform our practice and evoke our patience during Maintenance (Cuban 1988; Fullan 1982; Smith, Prunty, Dwyer, and Kleine 1987; Walmsley and Adams 1993). Educators who persist in their school improvement efforts will reap rewards today and in the years to come.

Key Maintenance Tasks

Confirming the Use of New Programs and Practices

At a routine level of maintenance, the task for teachers and others concerned with staff development is to simply make sure that programs and practices learned during inservice training are still being used—and used appropriately. To accomplish this task, staff members need ongoing feedback that will help them determine whether their current practice reflects the inservice training they received. The feedback may be provided informally by colleagues, the principal, and, with appropriate direction, even students and parents. More rigorous monitoring and fine-tuning will require the assistance of personnel specially trained in the techniques of supervision and coaching. Surveys, teacher self-reporting, and such classroom materials as curriculum guides, teacher planning books, collaborative action research, and student portfolios may also provide information about the use of practices and programs. We will discuss some of these techniques in more detail later in this chapter, in the section called "Specific Maintenance Activities."

Supporting Higher Levels of Use

At a higher level of maintenance, the task for all involved in staff development is to provide support for levels of use that transcend the routine or go beyond what was originally planned. Hall and Loucks (1977) describe these higher levels of use in their change model:

1. *Refinement.* Based on their knowledge of both short- and long-term consequences for students, teachers vary their use of an innovation to try to improve its effect.
2. *Integration.* Teachers combine their own efforts to use the innovation with the related activities of colleagues to collectively improve student learning within their common sphere of influence.
3. *Renewal.* Teachers reevaluate the quality of the innovation, look for ways to modify it to better promote student learning, examine new developments in the field, and explore new goals for themselves and the system.

Although not all teachers will carry their use of a practice or program to its highest level, it is important to provide the technical and psychological support that will enable at least some teachers to extend their professional practice to its fullest and strive for schoolwide integration and professional renewal. The resources critical to extension are time and access to colleagues. As basic as these resources may appear to be, they have traditionally been scarce, as new agendas and priorities compete for the hours in the school day. Some attention to extension activities must be sustained over the long term, however, if staff development is to reach its highest potential for integration and renewal.

Specific Maintenance Activities

The most effective activities at this stage will be those that help teachers and administrators monitor their own professional performance and capitalize on the power of colleagues working together to share knowledge and practice, to support one another through obstacles, to mentor new staff members who have less experience with

particular practices, and to incubate ideas for the next cycle of staff development. The critical roles for those responsible for Maintenance are resource person, mentor, and colleague.

Maintenance activities should have been identified and budgeted for during the Planning stage. What is maintained is the result of what has been taught during Training and integrated into daily practice during Implementation. Unlike the earlier stages of staff development, the activities appropriate for Maintenance vary so greatly from site to site and according to the content of the staff development program that we can recommend no one sequence of activities. The success of this stage is best judged by looking at whether it achieves its broad goals, not whether specific activities have occurred in a certain sequence.

The variety of activities described below may be used as a starting point for making choices about what will best help maintain a particular staff development program. Although activities for confirming the use of a new practice may at times be more appropriate than activities for extending the use of a practice, the two types of activities overlap considerably; therefore, we have not grouped them separately here.

Gathering Student Feedback

Feedback from students can often help teachers assess whether they are properly using specific practices. For instance, to determine whether a cooperative learning lesson is working as it should, teachers may ask students to describe and evaluate the role they played in helping their group meet its goals. Students in process writing classrooms routinely keep their written work in folders or portfolios and can be asked periodically to record, chart, and analyze their progress in spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, and content. Making regular routines of such feedback not only provides data for comparison with optimal practice, but underscores the active role of the learner in both of these approaches. Teachers can gain additional perspective on their use of new programs and practices by asking students to complete a questionnaire focusing on particular teaching behaviors.

Gathering Parent Feedback

The success of many school-based staff development projects rests at least in part on the understanding and cooperation of parents. For instance, a new program that includes the promotion of voluntary reading or completion of homework must include some level of parent involvement to acquire the information needed to assess that aspect of the program. A teacher can survey or interview parents about how much time their child spends reading or doing homework and use the resulting data to help determine whether the program truly supports the school improvement goals.

Reviewing Classroom Materials

One simple way for teachers to monitor their use of practices and program is to regularly review their lesson plans, curriculum, and student "products." A teacher in the Maintenance stage of an effort to institute writing across the curriculum may check to see that she has used writing in at least three different subject areas in a given week. A teacher seeking to promote multicultural awareness might weigh his text and weekly lesson plans against his own criteria for how much of the social studies curriculum should be devoted to traditionally underrepresented peoples. And a 1st grade teacher might use student portfolios to assess students' fluency in written language, looking at the variety and sophistication of the narrative structures they use and measuring their progress against her whole-language goals.

Videotaping or Audiotaping Teachers at Work

Periodically studying videotapes or audiotapes of their own teaching is an excellent way for teachers to compare their actual practice with their improvement goals, especially when the goals focus on instruction or the teacher's interaction with students. A teacher seeking to promote higher-level thinking, for instance, may need to regularly take time to review the kinds of questions she is asking, her use of wait time, her success in involving all students, and the quality of student responses. Although

a teacher can do this alone, inviting a colleague to assist provides valuable insights and, in the case of a videotape, allows for more movement in the classroom, since the colleague can follow the teacher with the video camera.

Conducting Classroom Observations

In evaluating the use of some practices and programs, there is no good substitute for feedback from an observer or peer coach who can gather data in the classroom context. A climate conducive to cooperative learning, for instance, involves the complex interaction of classroom management, group process skills, and appropriate curriculum materials. Actual classroom observation provides the richest picture of how cooperative learning is functioning in the classroom and, if there are areas of concern, allows scrutiny of possible contributing factors. In the Maintenance stage, the best framework for such observations may be paired colleagues who have gone through the five stages of the RPTIM process together. Each would regularly observe the other's classroom, and together they would improve their practice.

Mentoring New Staff Members

Any staff development project faces the threat of dilution over time as new staff members replace or join the staff members originally involved. The only way to counter dilution is to plan for the deliberate induction of new staff members into the expectations and "how to" of earlier staff development projects.

The staff members best equipped to accomplish this induction are those already well into the Maintenance stage. Early in the year, new staff members should be assigned mentors, whose job it is to provide an orientation to the staff development effort, an open door where new staff members can observe the strategies in practice, and a standing offer of assistance as the new staff members begin to move toward the staff development goals. After new teachers and administrators have gone through the same training the rest of the staff has experienced, mentors can coach them through Implementation.

Establishing Support Groups or Discussion Groups

No activity is more essential to maintaining enthusiasm for change efforts than regular group meetings. Group meetings should occur on at least two levels. First, small groups of three to seven teachers of a grade level, team, or subject should meet regularly to solve problems, share ideas, and offer one another emotional support. Second, a schoolwide group should meet three or four times a year to more formally consider (a) common problems affecting the smooth and continued use of effective practice and programs, (b) suggestions for modifying the original plans for the maintenance of new practices and programs, and (c) new goals for staff development that may emerge from staff members' experience with and discussion of the present practices and programs.

Taking Advantage of Opportunities for Professional Outreach

Many of the staff development efforts currently being adopted by large numbers of schools have special interest groups of practitioners, consultants, and college professors at the local, state, and national levels that participate in the conferences of organizations such as ASCD, the National Council of Teachers of English, or the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Capitalizing on teachers' and administrators' interest in attending or presenting at any of these conferences breathes new spirit into the school improvement effort. Educators who attend conferences frequently return with new developments, materials, or ideas that can rejuvenate their colleagues' interest and enthusiasm.

Resources for Maintenance

Because many of the activities in the Maintenance stage are initiated and analyzed by teachers, successful maintenance requires that those in the central office responsible for staff development provide teachers with sufficient resources to complete those activities.

Competent Coaches

If the previous stages of the staff development process have gone well, the school has already made an investment in competent coaches to provide ongoing analysis, support, and follow-up for teachers. These knowledgeable, trained staff members need to remain visible and accessible throughout the Maintenance stage; they are needed to help develop strategies for gathering feedback and to act as facilitators in sharing and problem-solving groups.

Time

Again, time is the most important resource. Maintenance activities will be successful only if staff members have the time to participate in them. Any planning for Maintenance should begin with creative brainstorming about how schedules can be adjusted to provide this critical element. It is essential to distinguish here between "real" time and "stolen" time, the latter being time which teachers and administrators are expected to tack on or squeeze from already stressful schedules. The extent to which a school provides real time signals its commitment to the improvement efforts, and may well be the key to the lasting success of any staff development program.

Strategies that have worked in some schools include:

- Concurrent, duty-free planning periods for teachers working on the same practices or program
- Early student dismissal
- Shorter class periods, so that a planning period can be added to the end of the day
- Professional days when educators are released from their regular duties to pursue professional growth
- Alternative, "write-your-own" substitutions for schoolwide, districtwide, or regional inservice activities
- Paid group work sessions outside of school time

The Results of Maintenance

Maintenance preserves the school's original investment of time, energy, and money to implement improved practice and sustains the positive attitude of the people involved in

the school improvement effort. Long-term commitments to time and resources during this final stage ensure that efforts at schoolwide change will thrive well beyond the infancy of Training and Implementation.

If school improvements are to flourish beyond the excitement of seeing the first signs of change, those people invested in the change need to continue giving attention and support to the most precious resource in our schools, the faculty who are committed to improving their professional effectiveness.

6
The Successful Use of the RPTIM Process

More Than a Cycle

The RPTIM process may at first seem to be a highly sequenced cycle for school-based staff development and improvement, one that flows logically from one step to the next. It is true that what happens in Stage 1 determines what will happen in Stage 2, and so on. It is also true that the last stage, Maintenance, usually makes educators aware of new needs and opportunities for improvement in the school, thus leading them back to the Readiness stage to begin the cycle anew. As educators work with the process, however, they will soon realize that the five stages are not lined up along a one-way street, but are both sequential and interactive. For instance, what happens in the Training or Implementation stage may cause a school faculty to revisit and revise their school improvement plan, goals, or inservice training programs.

In addition, each year staff members reexamine their vision, goals, and overall plan before determining the details of Training, Implementation, and Maintenance for the next year. Usually this review occurs in mid-spring, so that everyone in the school can become involved and contribute to the next steps for implementing school improvement.

Yearly planning may result in more than just working out the details of how to implement staff development to achieve the goals developed one year or several years

before. The faculty may refine their vision, change their goals, revise their approved plan for improvement, change their inservice programs, or strengthen their follow-up activities. These changes are a natural result of successful school change, increased faculty confidence, and new learnings and insights. As people grow and learn and change, so do their perceptions and understandings of what should be and what is possible. These new insights in turn affect the school improvement plan and staff development. Of course, yearly plans and changes in the initial improvement goals and activities are reviewed and approved by the district.

A Review of the Key Elements of the RPTIM Process

Expert Help

Throughout this discussion of the five stages of the RPTIM process, we have stressed the need for trained facilitators who can guide and assist staff members through the process of changing their professional behaviors. School-based improvement through staff development is a complex process that many teachers and administrators have not experienced. Simply telling them that they're in charge of putting together a school improvement and staff development plan is not enough. When no one in the school or district has been prepared to make decisions about school improvement or to plan and conduct effective school-based inservice training, school improvement will not happen.

Over the past decade, it has become increasingly apparent that if schools want to successfully implement school-based improvement and staff development, each school needs at least one person—preferably more—to guide the staff through the RPTIM stages. This person must be knowledgeable about staff development and school improvement, and trained to guide the staff through the RPTIM process. Facilitators may be from the central office or staff development unit or they may be principals, teachers, or parents. Without at least one such facilitator, successful long-term improvement is unlikely to occur.

The Development of Ownership and Commitment

Although ownership and commitment are first addressed in Readiness and Training, these feelings are developed and reinforced throughout the five stages. For example, they are fostered during Training by giving staff members choices about the when, how, and what of their involvement; by using peer trainers from the school and positive coaching during directed practice; and by developing and sharing personal action plans for using what has been learned.

In Implementation, ownership and commitment are developed through the successful use of what has been learned and through the support staff members receive from their peers during follow-up coaching and sharing sessions. Recognition and reward promote both teachers' and administrators' feelings of ownership and commitment.

During Maintenance, the celebration of successful changes, the involvement of peers and others in perpetuating effective practices, and the efforts to expand good practice to other parts of the school also help the staff build and sustain the feeling that this is their improvement program, not somebody else's.

The Full Involvement of the Principal

If school-based improvement and staff development are to succeed, the principal must be involved from Readiness through Maintenance. The leadership role in any stage may or may not be taken by the principal, but the principal's full *involvement* is a must. In fact, having teachers and others lead while the principal participates is an excellent way to build ownership and commitment. One key role the principal might consider playing, however, is that of the facilitator prepared to guide the school through the school improvement process. Whatever the role chosen, full involvement from the principal includes:

- Participating in Readiness activities
- Ensuring that staff members have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the improvement goals, programs, and plans
- Ensuring that staff ideas are considered and used whenever possible

- Participating in inservice activities with teachers
- Providing follow-up assistance and recognition to staff members who are implementing improvements
- Working collaboratively with the staff to sustain changes in effective practice

Because the involvement of the principal is so crucial to successful staff development for school improvement, the specific responsibilities of the person in this role should be determined prior to beginning the RPTIM process. The principal's role will vary from school to school, depending on the various strengths of the principal and faculty. Whatever is decided, it is essential that the principal receive training to prepare for the new responsibilities.

A Focus on Staff Development to Support School Improvement

The emphasis on staff development to support improvement within the school is present in all the RPTIM stages. In Readiness and Planning, we see it in the selection of improvement goals and programs that become the focus of inservice programs. In Training and Implementation, we see it reflected in the needs assessment, inservice training, and implementation activities designed to enable staff members to make specific improvements in their work setting. And, finally, in Maintenance, we see it again in the effort to ensure that staff members retain and maintain the improvements they have put into practice in the schools.

Although the RPTIM process assumes a close relationship between staff development and school improvement, its practices can also be applied to districtwide improvement or to some other approach to designing professional development programs. In fact, most of the RPTIM practices apply to all staff development efforts.

An Emphasis on Research

Throughout the five stages, recommended practice is based on the research related to developing commitment and ownership, adult learning, effective inservice education, follow-up assistance and coaching, and the change process. In addition, the RPTIM approach to staff development

advocates the selection of school improvements and inservice education programs focusing on practices and programs that research indicates will increase student learning. Finally, research supports the RPTIM practices described in this book: Thompson 1982; McQuarrie 1984; Wood, McQuarrie, and Thompson 1982; Wood and Kleine 1988; Goins 1991; and Sly 1992.

64

7
The Key to Significant Change

MUCH OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS BOOK IS NOT NEW; IT is based on the research and best practice that have been available to educators for some time. What we have done is simply provide a practical framework for understanding and using what we already know about staff development and school improvement.

As we move into the 21st century, decentralization, shared decision making, the restructuring of public schools, school improvement, and increased demands for change are the order of the day. The RPTIM process for school-based staff development addresses and supports all of these concepts. It allows districts to move decisions about improved practice and programs from the district level to the school level. It provides schools with a systematic way to engage faculty, administrators, parents, and community leaders in shared decision making about schooling for their children. It provides schools with a process that will enable stakeholders to build and implement new visions of how schools should be structured to address the changing needs in their community, state, and nation. And, finally, it allows schools to bring about real and significant changes in professional practice.

Over the next decade, individual schools will undoubtedly be required to modify their practices and programs. We hope this book will help schools at least recognize the need for a coordinated staff development process like the one described here, for we believe this kind of process is essential to making significant and enduring changes that will improve schools for years to come.

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How to Organize a School-Based Staff Development Program

In this addition to ASCD's how-to series, you'll find a staff development program that will put your school on the road to improvement. The RPTIM staff development program is based on the belief that the school is the primary unit of change and that careful long-range planning is essential to realizing improvement. The five stages of the program—Readiness, Planning,Training, Implementation, and Maintenance—lead to the achievement of real and significant changes in professional practice.

The RPTIM process allows districts to move decisions about improved practice and programs from the district level to the school level. It also provides schools with a systematic way to engage faculty, administrators, parents, and community leaders in shared decision making about schooling. And it provides schools with a process that will enable stakeholders to build and implement new visions of how schools should be structured to address the changing needs of their community, state, and nation.

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